1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

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●516

TYPICAL SEMI HOUSE ON THE FRONTIER

[FACING P. 117]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

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OCCUPIED RANCHERIA ON THE FRONTIER

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY

[FACING p. 119]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

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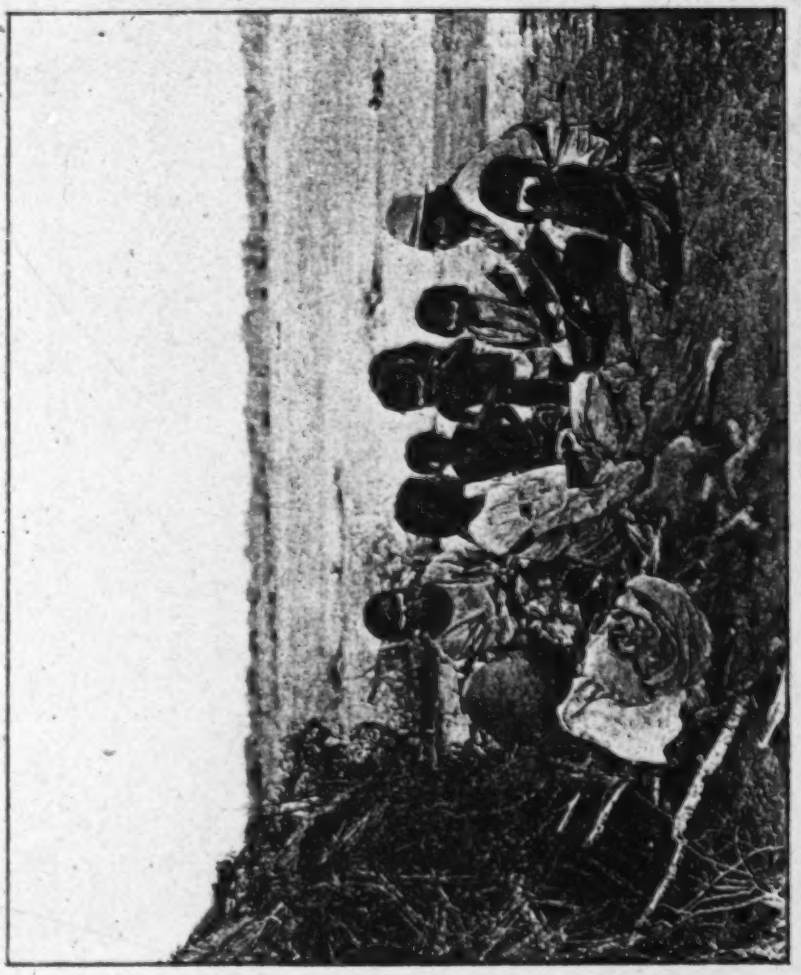

SERI FAMILY GROUP

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT PL. XIV

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY

[FACING P. 139]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

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GROUP OF SERI BOYS

[p. 144 A]

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

ripening); most of the larger muscles were already gnawed away, leaving loose ends of fiber and strings of tendon clinging to the bone, the condition being such that the remaining flesh might easily have been cut and scraped away by means of a knife; yet whenever a warrior or woman or youth hungered he or she took down the heavy joint, squatted or sat on the ground with back to one side of the doorway, held the mass at the height of the mouth, and gnawed, sucked, and swallowed, frequently tearing the tissue by twisting and backward jerks of the head, and not only masticating, but swallowing the free ends of tendons still attached to the bone. This process was varied only by seizing with the hands and tearing off a strip of flesh or skin already loosened by the teeth; and it was continued until the bones were practically clean, when they were wrenched apart by the stronger men in order that the cartilaginous cushions and epiphyses might be gnawed away. The only approach to cooking or carving was a parboiling of the foot, after the leg was wrenched off at the hock, until the hoof was sufficiently softened to be knocked off with the protolithic hupf[1] shown in plate XLIII, when half a dozen matrons and well-grown maidens gathered about to gnaw the gelatinous tissue (already softened by incipient decay as well as by the parboiling) investing the coffin-bone. The entire procedure in this as in many other cases proclaimed the absence of knife-sense. The Caucasian huntsman does not have to think of his knife when game is to be bled or skinned or dissected; his habit-trained hand knows where to find the implement, how to seize it, and in most cases how to wield it advantageously; but the Seri hand possesses no such cunning, and uses the knife only clumsily and at second thought, if at all. The Seri huntsman, on the other hand, does not have to think of nails and teeth, for they are trained and coordinated by hereditary habit to spontaneously act in unison and with the utmost possible or needful vigor; while the Caucasian at least has completely lost the claw-and-teeth instinct of offense and defense.

Conformably with their striking independence of knives, the Seri are conspicuously unskilful in all mechanical operations involving the use of tools. Their most elaborate manufacture is the balsa, made from reeds broken at the butts and with the leaves and tops removed by the hands or by fire, bound together with hand-made cords; next in elaborateness come the bow and arrow, normally made without cutting tools; then follows their fictile ware, which is made wholly by hand, without aid of the simple molds and paddles and other devices used by neighboring tribes; while their primitive fabrics were apparently of hand-extracted fibers, twisted and woven wholly by hand, with the aid of wood or bone perforators in sewing and possibly in weaving. Practically the Seri possess but a single tool, and this is applied to a peculiarly wide variety of purposes—it is the originally natural cobble used for crushing bones and severing tendons, for grinding seeds and

[1] Pictured postea, p. 188.

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

524 Dice are three splints of cane; tapering toward both ends, nearly flat. The concave inside is greenish white, the outside darker. The count is: 0 insides up, win 4; 1 inside up, win 1; 2 insides up, lose 1 and play; 3 insides up, lose 4. The 3 splints are stacked together, then thrown endwise against the palm, a piece of turtle shell, or anything similar, so as to fly forward and scatter on the ground. (Some players probably acquire a degree of skill in making the canes fall right.) A player repeats until he throws 2 whites or insides. For points scored, he draws lines on the ground in front of himself. His opponent erases his lines as he wins, or adds to them as he loses, until he himself is ahead, when he begins to mark his own lines. Ten points wins the game. A stick is then set in the ground by the winner, who goes on playing the next game. That is, if he has 8, and throws 4, he sets up his stick, erases 6 lines so as to start the new game with a credit of 2, and throws again. The Seri perform these additions and subtractions with the rapidity of a practiced white man.

A ring of people may play at once. Their scoring in relation to one another was not ascertained, but it is presumably each from his neighbor, with the totals shown by sticks.

Since with fair throws the losses in this game must equal gains, a lead of 10 over an opponent is as much as could expectably be played for if the game were not to be unduly protracted.

526 Football race is played with *palo fierro* balls, perhaps 3 inches in diameter, one to each side of 4 runners. The ball may be moved only with the foot. The race is along the beach, where cactus and brush do not interfere. The distance, according to places named to Sr. Thomson and known to him, is about 6 miles. The men on a side relieve each other in informal relays; usually only 1 or 2 finish. The [648] Seri once went north to play the Papago this game, but lost.

Shinny is a woman's game, preliminary to the football race. Four women to a side carry sticks with which they try to throw an 8-12 inch hoop to a goal mark at the end of a short field. Behind each side stand the 4 men runners who are to race with a ball.

Notes on Material Culture

482 Women carry loads on their heads with a ring: men with the pên, Spanish *palanca* or lever, a stick over the shoulder, with load [171] hung from each end. These are the usual Sonora and Sinaloa Indian ways of carrying.

516 The Seri sit and lounge randomly. The men squat, occasionally cross the legs, put them sidewise, or sit with one knee up. The women wear long cloth skirts, but apparently sit just as variously.

714 Body armor, *naitɬanika'p*, with sleeves and helmet, and a shield, saXe'*ti*X, both of hide, were worn. The shield was described as 4 or 5 feet high, roof-shaped toward the front. It is not clear whether

3:Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940) 1945
MU31 Ser1 MU31

[301]
[302]
[386]
[516]

FIG. 11. PAINTING THE FACE
USING A RED PIGMENT OBTAINED FROM THE TOROTE.

223 lice-infested carcasses were then gathered
264 and brought to a central place among the stinking rocks where a gluttonous feast was held in the dark, the long ahungered tribesmen gorging themselves with the soft entrails and succulent parts, and carousing in the carnage until overcome by slumber.

281 The day following the slaughter, the
294 matrons collected the carcasses with least damaged plumage and carefully removed the skins, which were then gnawed and sucked clean of flesh and grease and dried in the sun (Fig. 8). From two or more of these skins they made a kilt or robe (Figs. 1, 2), the principal apparel, not so much for protection from cold as from the scratch and prick of the abounding spines and thorns of Seriland. The skins were sewed with sinew and often held in place on the body by a
283 cord made of human hair (Fig. 1). The
302 culture of their long, luxuriant hair, indeed, was an important matter. They brushed their hair regularly with a brush fashioned

[p. 200(A)]

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FIG. 13. PREPARING BASKETRY MATERIAL

THE SPLINTS ARE MADE BY HAND AND MOUTH STRIPPING OF THE BRANCHES OF TOROTE AND PALO BLANCO.

3: Davis & Dawson E-5 (1922-1940)1945 NU31 Seri NU31

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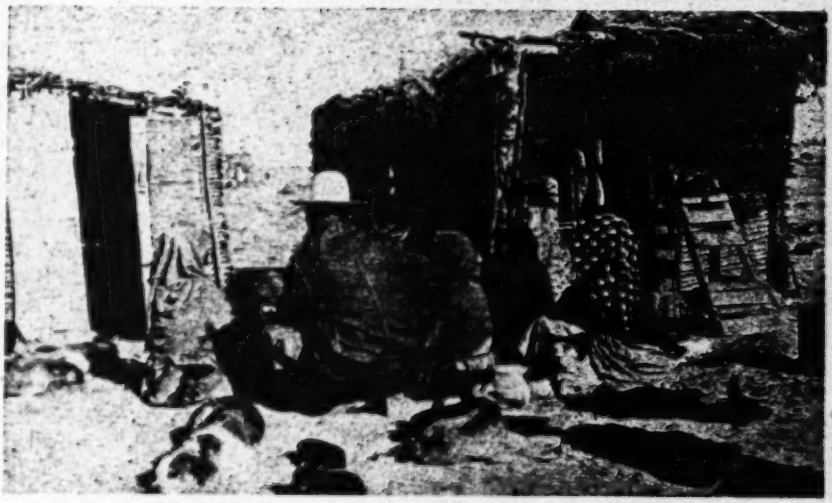

FIG. 16. FAMILY DOGS ARE OFTEN MORE NUMEROUS THAN THE PEOPLE
HERE A GROUP OF SEVEN SERIS IN THE VILLAGE NEAR KINO KEEPS TEN OR MORE OF THE MONGREL CANINES.

[p. 264(C)]

5:Dawson N-5 (1940) 1944 NU31 Seri NU31

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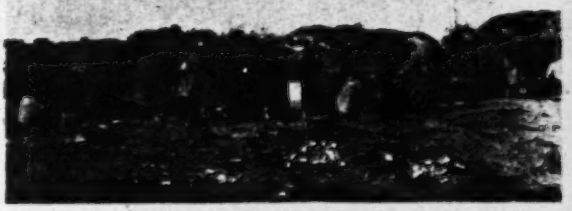
1. A basket of cactus meal.

342 2. A Seri village on Tiburon Island. Note the large shells of the sea turtle that serves as food.



285
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342 3. Making the Seri basket. House is constructed of ocotillo branches and brush.

[p. 135]

5:Dawson N-5 (1940) 1944 NU31 Seri NU31

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Preparing a mesquite bean meal cake on the stone metate.

Seri women carrying firewood back to camp. Note the baskets and the head pads made of mesquite or torote.

7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU31 Seri NU31

Distribución geográfica

000 Los indios seris viven en dos pequeñas poblaciones de la costa del Estado de Sonora, frente al Golfo de California, en Desemboque y en Punta Chueca. De allí pasan con alguna frecuencia a la Isla de Tiburón en el mencionado Golfo de California.

En Desemboque viven aproximadamente 35 familias seris y en Punta Chueca 16. Tan solo en el primero de estos dos lugares se hallan establecidas 5 familias "yoris" (mestizas).

Problemas sanitarios

Los seris carecen de defensa ante ciertas enfermedades que, como el sarampión y la gripe, adquieren en sus relaciones con los "yoris"; estas enfermedades causan muchas defunciones entre los indígenas.

[302]
[291]
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Familia indígena seri de Desemboque, Sonora. *Foto Enriqueta Yurchenco.*

Según el anciano seri Chico Romero, último gobernador seri, hubo una fuerte epidemia de viruela allá por 1897, que causó la muerte de una tercera parte de la tribu que se encontraba residiendo en Costa Rica, ranchería de la costa de Sonora.

En 1955 se propagó el sarampión entre los seris, ocasionando gran número de víctimas, niños y adultos; la actividad del maestro rural Leo Sandoval, del lingüista Eduardo Mosser y de las autoridades sanitarias de Hermosillo, lograron contener la mortalidad; no obstante, el número de defunciones llegó al 5 % del total de la población nativa.

175 if they were as hungry then as they are today, they would not stop to
648 spike a man up preparatory to serving him. Their only tools then were
266 rocks to use as hammers and hoop iron for knives, and these are in
114 universal use today.

[412] There is no doubt that the men were killed, but I think these mining men purposely exaggerated their findings, if any.

648 There is no doubt that the Seris were brave fighters, treacherous
721 murderers, sparing neither men, women or children on their raids,
727 killing ruthlessly. But there is one charge which cannot be brought against them, which cannot be said of many tribes north of the border. So far as I could find out, they never tortured nor scalped.

648 The Seris never took prisoners and they never inter-married with
721 other tribes, so their strain is pure.

727 There was one exception. Sixty or seventy years ago, the Seri
563 Chief Coyote Iguana and his band of warriors held up the stage between Hermosillo and Guaymas, and killed all except a handsome Spanish girl of the better class. This girl, Coyote Iguana made his wife and by her raised a family. One granddaughter still survived in 1924, and while more attractive than the general run of Seri, her complexion was fully as dark.

800 The Seris, Ishmaelites among the native tribes of Mexico---the most fascinating Indians in North America!

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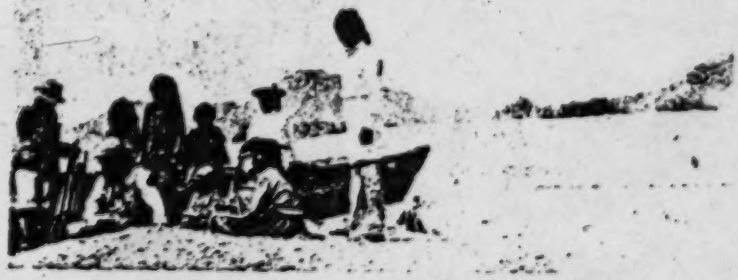

123 *Reception Committee, Tiburon Island - 1935*

115 On the twenty-fifth of April, nineteen twenty-two, I engaged the services of Roberto Thompson, who with his father and grandfather

[text continues on p. 149]

five-gallon cans full. They were fastened one each end of a *palanca*, or shoulder pole, and thus brought to camp. If anyone thinks this is easy they should try it over rocky, uneven, sandy, stony ground, dodging thorny vegetation at every step. 123

The colors of the mountains were mostly red of volcanic character, with great streaks of yellow and pink, deeply cut with side canyons and sharp ridges, all similar to other desert ranges. [133]

The men caught a few crabs and gathered clams in the afternoon, which helped out our larder. One of them told about his wife being shot. He said they had a big fiesta and during the drunk, a Seri shot at his head. He happened to be stooping alongside his wife and the bullet buried itself in his wife's thigh. We could feel it through her clothes.

A good many years ago when stages ran between Nogales and Guaymas, the Seris held up the stage, killed the men and captured one Mexican girl. She was brought here and made the wife of one of the chiefs, Coyote Iguana, and she bore children. Some years later her brothers came here to induce her to return, but she refused, saying that she was ashamed to go back and she had children here. About fifteen years ago in a battle with the Papagos, two of her sons were killed. 648 727 563

The Papagos have taken toll of many Seris, these hunted Indians who are such fascinating and ingenious companions, whether they are harpooning turtle or packing water through the thorny wastes. 648

372 516 291

Seris making fire (with fire drill) - Island of Tiburon

10: Davis E-5 (1922-ca. 1939) 1965 NU31 Seri NU31

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576 •

Fastening feathers on arrows with sinew held tight in his teeth.
1929

[283]

142
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Seri Indians at home

133
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415

Seri Indians preparing their meal

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412
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FIG. 1. Crushing the root bark of zkoktz (*Fraxseria dumosa*), to a pulp. Note the pieces of root in the left foreground, the little pieces of *mókni ózxW* sap (*Guaiacum coulteri*) in the center foreground, and the chunks of mineral in the right foreground.

386
412

FIG. 2. The first or brighter batch of blue pigment, *?antezj kóll*.